

Be a platypuses buddy

Try to:

- Leave burrows alone as the platypus may be incubating eggs which are very fragile
- Protect platypus habitats by revegetating eroded creek banks with suitable plants
- Fence off creek banks so livestock don't damage them
- Replant bare or eroded creek banks

Don't be surprised

- If you notice that platypus come and go from an area
- They may appear and disappear in some areas due to predators
- If you find a platypus by itself, as they are solitary creatures and their time with others is limited

Every year platypuses die because of human, they become entangled in fishing nets or yabby traps, are dragged into water pumps, lose food because of insecticides being sprayed near rivers or are attacked by cats and dogs.

Because of this the Central Coast PACT, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, local councils, schools and other interested groups have produced this Backyard Buddies Brochure.

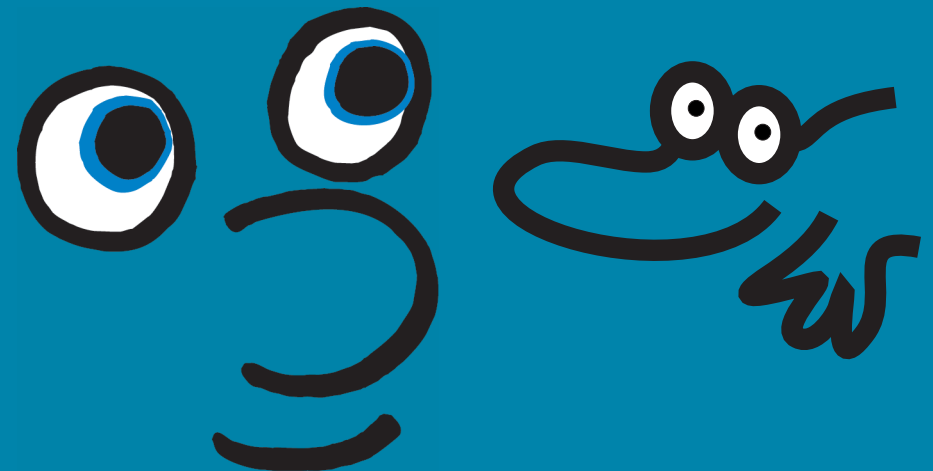
Find out more about your own backyard buddies

Visit: www.backyardbuddies.net.au
Call: 1300 361 967



Be a backyard buddy

Make your neighbourhood friendlier for platypuses



Platypuses are intriguing animals. You never know, they might live right under your nose in a creek or stream near you. If you sit quietly on a creek bank early in the morning or late in the afternoon you might just see one.

The platypus is also known as the duck billed platypus or *Ornithorhynchus anatinus*. This name comes from the Greek meaning platys (broad), pous (foot).

Platypuses are one of two animals in the world that are known as monotremes. The other is the echidna. Monotremes are mammals that lay eggs.

Be a backyard buddy

It's easy. All you have to do is to take a few steps. Step one is to find out what platypuses like and don't like.

Platypus like:

- A series of **pools and riffles**
- **Slow flowing water**
- Pools depths of 1 to 2 metres (no deeper than 5 m) with little sand accumulation
- Plenty of **water plants** and plants **overhanging the streambank**
- **Good water quality**
- Presence of large woody debris (**snags and logs**)
- **Good supply of yabbies, worms and water bugs**

But they don't like:

- **Foxes, cats and dogs**
- **Eroded and degraded streambanks**
- **Livestock in creeks**
- **Pollution** including detergents, fertilizers, pesticides and rubbish

You can help look after platypuses in your area

Platypuses are shy creatures and this is how you can protect them in your very own neighbourhood:

- Don't use yabby traps to catch yabbies in freshwater streams
- Don't disturb if you see them
- Plant native plants along the stream bank, it will protect the banks and provide areas to live
- Clean up streams by removing broken bottles and rubbish
- Keep your cats inside
- Keep your dogs on a leash if walking them near platypus habitat

Platypus profile

They are brown in colour and quite small creatures. An adult platypus can be from 45cm up to 60cm in length and can weigh up to 2.7kg.

Male platypuses have a poisonous spur on the inside of their hind legs. The spur contains a poison that the platypus uses to defend his territory from other males and enemies.

Platypuses dig two types of burrows in streambanks. A nesting burrow and a resting burrow. Burrows can be up to 20m long. Burrows can be hard to find as the entrances are often underwater or covered by overhanging streambank vegetation.

Platypuses eat tasty yabbies, fish, worms, waterbugs (macroinvertebrates) and sometimes small frogs that live in the creeks and streams. Occasionally platypuses eat insects that fall into the water. They feed early in the morning or late in the afternoon, foraging in the creek-bed for their food.

